

Formerly the ocean was not as large as it is to-day, and at that time the Alabama Indians, who lived upon the other side, came westward across it in canoes. When they had gotten about halfway over they came upon an island where they rested and fished. Then they resumed their journey and presently reached this land.

At first they lived upon acorns, and they also roasted and ate cane sprouts. Later they made bows and arrows with which to kill deer, and having nothing with which to cut up the meat they used sharp rocks. They also had to learn how to kindle a fire. To accomplish this they used as a drill the stem of a weed called hassala`po ("plant-with-which-to-make-fire") which is like sassafras and the wood of a tree called bâksa (bass) for a base stick.

Traveling inland, they established their village near a river and lived there for a long time. Presently they came in contact with the Choctaw and warred against them, almost destroying one Choctaw town, so that the Choctaw became disheartened and wanted to make peace. For this purpose they selected a poor man, promising that, if he were successful, they would give him the two daughters of a certain prominent woman. They gave him a white deerskin shirt and white deerskin leggings and moccasins, put a string of white beads about his neck and a rattle in his hand.

Thus provided, the man crossed to the first Alabama village shaking his rattle and singing as he went. When the Alabama heard him they came out, took hold of him, and accompanied him back. On coming near the town they raised him on their backs and entered the place in this manner, singing continually. They set him down and he talked to them for a long time, laying down one string of white beads as he did so. Then he set out for another village, accompanied as before. On the way one of them seized a gun and shot under him. Another ran toward him and discharged a gun near

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his ear. At the next village he made another long talk and laid out a second string of white beads. He did the same at the third village. Then he returned to his people and they gave him the girls as they had promised, but soon afterwards he lay down and died.

One summer a man said he wanted to go west and several wished to accompany him, but a berdache ("half-man") tried to stop them. "Why are you going?" he said. "I am going in order to kill and eat turkey, deer, and other game animals; after that I will return." "There are plenty of turkey and deer here," said the berdache, but the other persisted in his plan and after they had disputed for some time the berdache said, "You are a man but you want to run away. I will not run. I will not run, although my grandfather used to say that the English, Âlâta, and French are all hard fighters. When they come, I will take a knife, lie down under the bed, and keep striking at them until they kill me." 1

Nevertheless the man and his friends started off. They came to a river, made canoes, and proceeded along it a great distance until they finally reached a Choctaw settlement. They

stopped for a while, thinking that these people were friends, but presently they observed that they were making arrows, so they became frightened and reentered their canoes.

Following the river, they came upon many bear swimming across and some wanted to kill them, but others said, "Don't shoot," and they kept on. Presently they heard the sound of firearms behind and said to one another, "People are following us." Not long afterwards they came upon a creek emptying into the river, its mouth almost obscured by canes, and they shoved their canoes into it and waited. After a while they heard the Choctaw canoes pass on up, so they remained where they were all that night. When it was nearly day they heard the sound of returning paddles and after they had died away they continued their journey.

After they had gone on for some time the Alabama came to the house of a white man. He exchanged corn for venison and told them that the route by the river which they had intended to take was very long, so he tied oxen to their canoes and dragged them across a narrow place.

Then they paddled along for some time and reached a trading house belonging to a white blacksmith. They procured from him old knives and axes in exchange for venison. Some Choctaw lived there who said to them, "There is no war here. There is peace. We are friends of the Alabama." Afterwards, however, some of both tribes got drunk on whisky obtained at the store and wanted

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to fight. But the Alabama who had remained sober took their friends down to the canoes, put them in, and started along.

As they pushed off the Choctaw stood near the shore and shot at them until they got out into the middle of the river. Later they went back to the store and found that the Choctaw were all gone, so they had the blacksmith make knives for them and sharpen their old axes.

The white people came from the other side of the ocean long after the Alabama had crossed and tried to buy land from them. They would get the Indians drunk, and when they had become sober they would find bags of money hung to their necks in payment for land. It was after they had sold their lands in this way that they came westward.

After leaving the blacksmith the Alabama came to Bayou Boeuf. Later they moved to Opelousas, La., and still later to Tyler County, Tex. Afterwards they settled Peach-tree village (tākosa'wa ō'la). There were many Alabama at that time and they separated into a number of villages. One was north of North Woodville and was called i'lāne ispatāla'ka ("Cane island") and afterwards simply patala'ka, because some canes (i'lāne) were found near the creek. They were living in these towns when the Mexican War broke out.

When the Mexicans were here the white men came and built a town, putting up stores. After a while they heard that the Mexicans and whites were coming to fight with each other, and the

people all ran off. They left their stores and went away. While they were moving on without stopping, it rained and the white girls walked along with their dresses half soaked. Some were weeping. Continuing on in this way they passed through Peach-tree village. Some of them were perishing with hunger and asked the Indians for food. Then they gave them milk, but instead of drinking it they gave it to the children.

Just after the whites had left, the Mexicans came to this town, and their soldiers opened the stores which they had abandoned and used the goods. By and by they wanted to cross a big river there and threw bales of cotton into the water and crossed upon them. When they got over they found that the Indians had a camp on this side. They did not like them and wanted to kill them. But instead of killing them they drove them back and made them stay on the other side of the river. The Indians walked while two Mexicans rode on each horse.

After that the white people came to fight. Some of them went round the town and broke down a bridge over a bad creek, so that when the Mexicans arrived they could not cross and all were killed.

Their general (Capitani) Santa Anna, escaped alone on his horse. He fell down in a swampy place but got up and ran on and lay down in a thicket. While he lay there two deer whistled, and the whites

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came up and captured him. Then they demanded his land of him, and he left the people, got into a boat, and went away.

Another party of whites reached that town and the Mexicans all ran off. Some Mexicans who were drunk remained walking about holding each other up, and the whites throw them down and stabbed them. When the Mexicans ran off they had just been cooking and left earthen pots full of peas mixed with red peppers on the fire. When the white men saw the Indians there they recognized them and had them recross the river. "Hang up something white and stay by it," they said, "lest those coming after us make trouble." So they hung up a white cloth and remained by it.

Footnotes

119:1 From "I will not run" to the end is given in the Koasati language, because the Koasati were somewhat looked down upon.